

VINDEX ANGLICUS,
OR,
THE PERFECTIONS
OF THE
ENGLISH
LANGVAGE.

Defended, and asserted,



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KINDEX ANGLICUS,

O R,

The perfections of the English Language
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 Mongt all things requisite to noble actions, I never saw
so scarce reckoned, neither can I acknowledge it due from
so excellency a creature as man ; to any but the eternall ma-
jesty of his Creator. Which consideration makes me adventure
the hazard of many censures, resolvynge so account those slender
scars they shall be able to inflict upon me in this attempt, as char-
acters of honour, descyphering to every ingenuous eye my love
to my Country. Whatever ensue, it will suffice me with content e-
nough, if my honest endeavour serve as an incitement to some
more able pen, to handle such a worthy though almost neglected
subject, as is the Patronage of our truly excellent Language.

I seeke not to compasse any such miracle as to convince the
prepossessed judgements of foraigners, but shall thinke to retreat
with victory enough, if I can but foyle those unnaturall dome-
stics, who degenerately do either with a certaine fond affected
Idolatry adore the Language of other nations, contemning their
owne ; or else imperiously (as if censoria in this particular) doe
adde, detact, mangle and transforme her, according to their
weake fancyes : vainely spoylng the best of vulgar Languages.
I will not sticke to avouch it a *Language*, though that very affir-
mation be a received *Paradox* ; nor will I blush to parallelle it
with the best of the minor Languages.

And to make it good, I will not deduce it from *Babylons* confu-
sion, for truly I believe it had a nobler beginning : neither will I
trafficke with *Ashley* so farre for it as *Perfia*, or *Chersonesus* :
seeing I looke upon such deductions, as learned fantasies conducing
little to prove our antiquity, neither needfull ; since we together
with our Language are extracted from the *Germans*, whose title
is so glorious in that kinde, that the rest of Europe gives place un-
to them. There are two maine objections which seeme to exclude

us from the title of a Language, our *Mutability* and *Mixture*, happy faults ; and so universal that I presume the best of our opponents are hardly free from : though (it may be) not equally guilty of, for I confess our *mutability* to be more frequent, yet choycer then theirs ; and our composed mixture consisting of greater variety, yet accompanied with more purity & felicity. The *Italian* is compounded of *Latine*, *Barbarous Greeks*, and *Gothis*; The *French* of *Latine*, *Dutch*, and the old *Gallique*; The *Spanis* of *Latine*, *Gothis*, and *Moris*; *Germany* hath a taste of the *Romane Empire*, and her bordering neighbours ; if I be not deceived in us you may discover all these with advantage ; yet their purel^t expression fitly seated, and separated from their Barbarismes, which by others are swallowed together with the rest. All of them are so mutable that our frequency is excusable : Nay, Mixture and mutability are things so naturall to Languages, that none but the *Hebrew* (if that) are free from them.

What is become of the ancient *Latine*, used in the reignes of *Latians* and *Carmenata* ; or in the times of the *Tarquinis*, or *Doomvirs* ; nay, or under the very Consuls or Emperours, if bookes did not conserve it ? the same question may we make unto the *French*, *Spanis*, the latter *Italians* ; and *Germans* also : Though *Bacchus* would make us beleeve wonders of their antiquity, immutability, and the hidden *Cabala* or mysteries contained in their Language, like as in the *Hebrew*, to which by his account it is not inferiour in age, he deriving it euen from the dayes of *Adam*. Which perfection supposed true, we also might partly lay hold of, as a branch of the same tree. But

— *Credat Judaeus Apoll, non ego :*

Let him that please beleeve the same,

For I the fable quite disclaime.

For my part I beleeve, that what the learder *Physitians* pronounce of humane bodyes, how that they are by time often renew'd, excrecions, cold, heat, sicknesse, wounds, & sweat, consuming the present and giving place to new substance, may be said of Languages altered by every age ; and as posterity hath given place to us, so we shall yeild to our antiquity, not onely in our lives and fortunes, but our Language also.

By this time I hope you will grant us the name of a Language, and stay us no more upon the simple terme of *Speech*; wherefore now will I direct my selfe against those admirers of forraigne

tongues, slighting their owne, inferiour to none of them in true excellency : none I presume will deny the perfection of a Language to consist in facility, copiousness, sweetnesse, and significance, in all which if I can make good that our Language is equal, if not superiour to the rest, I hope he must be very farre transported with passion, and deepeley factions that will not assent unto me.

The great facility of our Language is evident by a double demonstration. The easie wherewith others commit ours to memory; and the singular helpe which it affords us to the attaining of others. Our Monosyllables, & the exemption we have from flexions, (whereunto most others are incident) doe greatly facilitate ours; which though some may reckon as a defect, I will esteeme a blessing, accounting that multiplicity of cases, genders, moodes and tenses (which puts us to schoole to leарne our mother tongue) the Emblems of Babels curse, and confusion. For our facility in learning others, let us renew but the old observation ; Turne an ingenious Englishman into what Country soever, and quickly you shall for the most part see him profit so well, that his speech will little or nothing differ from the genuine dialect, of what Language soever is there used by the natives; no common priviledge.

Our Copiousnesse I need not use much art to demonstrate, for besides the treasures of the ancient Dutch which we retaine in our Saxon monosyllables, the choicer wits of our nation, have fetcht hither the very Quintessence of those other Languages; and by their excellent industry so happily improved our English soyle, that I dare safely affirme many of those forraigne scyons beare better, and more plentifully then in their former climate. The Latines and French are defective in the expression of many words which we utter with ease, and they have none whereunto our ability extendeth not : our abundance ends not here. We have Court, and Country English, Northerne, and Southerne Dialects, which differ not onely in pronunciation, but also in words, and termes. There is no Language can deliver a matter with more variety then ours, plainly by Synonyma's, or by circumlocution with Metaphors : which any mean judgement will instance with sundry examples. We almost equallise the Greeks, and even exceed the Latines in a peculiar grace of compounding many words together, which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a Language.

Our significance, and abilities in expression, in the severall parts both

both letters, words, and phrases, is very eminent, in number, and use of letters we exceed both *Greeks*, *Latines*, *French* and *Italiens*: our words are incomparably significant, insomuch that many of them have four or five severall significations. Our interjections are so fit for the expression of our passions, that they seeme to be derived from the very nature of our severall affections; when many of those of other tonges are almost ridiculous. What variety doth any other nation bragge of that we have not almost with equall felicity made our owne? *The Italian Courtier*, the *French Salust*, the *Spanish Guzman*, the *Latine Naso*, and the *Greeke Polybius*: who would read that matchlesse essay of Mr *Sandys*, upon the *Aeneids*, and would not thinke it writ so by the peerlesse *Moro* himselfe: how properly hath the renowned *Lord Bacon* taught us to speake the termes of *Art* in our own Language? we judged it impossible, till we saw it performed; which difficulty when I see overcome, makes me despaire of nothing: What matchlesse and incomparable peeces of eloquence hath this time of *Civill warre* afforded? came there ever from a Princes pen such exact peeces as are His Majesties *Declaratioms*? Were there ever speeches uttered in better Language, or sweeter expreſſions, then those of the noble and Learned Lord *Digby*, and some other worthy Personages? didever nation expose choycer more honourable or eloquent discourses, then ours hath done in our *Sovereignes* behalfe, since these unhappy diſſions? There is no ſort of verſe either ancient, or Modern which we are not abie to equall by Imitation, we have our English *Virgil*, *Ovid*, *Seneca*, *Lucan*, *Inuenal*, *Martial*, and *Casalus*: In the Earle of *Surry*, *Daniell*, *Johnson*, *Spencer*, *Donne*, *Shakespeare*, and the glory of the reſt *Sandys*, and *Sydney*. We have eminent advantages of all other vulgar Languages in *Poetry*. The *Italian* is ſo full of vowels, that he is ever cumbered with *Elysions*. The *Dutch* with conſonants, that his verſe are ſickē of the *Sciatica*; The *French* cannot afford you four words whose accent are in the *Antepenultima*, and therefore unfit for *Dactils*, which the *accents* and *metter* do ſo naturally ſquare with us, that in both we deservedly bear the prize from all the reſt. The *Spaniſh* and *Italian* want our *casura* in the midſt of the verſes, the *Italian* cannot afford you a *masculine* rime: nor the *French* make metter of the *Antepenultima*, and yet there is not any of the three Syllables whereunto our ability extendeth not.

The *sweetnesse* of our Language I doubt not to compare with any vulgar whatsoever, let us put it to the tryall and compare it with others. The *Italian* I confess is an excellent, Princely, and pleasant Language, upon which the best judgements looke with great respect: yet it wants sinews, and passes as a silent water. The *French* is truly delicate, but too affected and effeminate. The *Spaniard* majesticall, but terrible & boisterous. The *Dutch* manly, but very harsh. Now we in borrowing from each of them give the strength of consonants to the *Italian*, the full sound of syllables to the *French*, the variety of termination with milder accents to the *Spaniard*, and dissolve with more facility the *Dutch* vowels, like bees gathering their perfections leave their drossie to themselves! So when substance combineth with delight, plenty with delicacy, beauty with majesty, and expedition with gravity, what can want to the perfection of such a Language?

—omisso mirari beata.

Fumum, et opes, preputumque Roma.

Admire not then the smoky tume,
The wealth and traine of mighty *Rome*.

For one of our great wits (who understood most Languages in Europe) affirmes, that in uttering sweetly, and properly the consistit of the minde, which is the end of Speech, we parrell all any other tongue in the world: and that our Language is such, that extrenes looking upon it now may deservedly say.

Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostris.

She now abounds in proper store,
And stands in need of us no more.

Certainly the mixture of our extractions from others, joyned with our owne monosyllables, make up such a perfect harmony: that so you may frame your speech majesticall, pleasant, delicate, or manly according to your subject, and exactly represent in ours, whatsoever grace any other Language carrieth. Yet let none think that I stand in any competition with the sacred *Hebrew*, learned *Greeks*, or fluent *Latines*, or claime a superiority over the rest; my ambition extends not so high, though you see I want not pretence for it. Let us looke upon our owne as a Language, equall to the best of vulgar: and for my part,

Let others retaine their ancient dignity and esteem.

Upon faire termes I have ended the controversy, and must now begin a fiercer combat against a second enemy,

Methes

Motheres and Cankers, who with their shallow inventions and silly fancyes, must still be engraving new coyned words in our *English* nursery, without either art or judgement. I seeke not to discredit their worthy and immortall labours, who with unmatched industry, have fetcht hither the best inhabitants of other climates, and made them *denizens* in our *Colonies*: those who with a skilfull felicity have bought, brought, or borrowed, the richest ornaments of other Languages to make ours abound with plenty, and variety; but those I disclaime, who when the worke is excellently performed already, must still be fingring; and when the Quintessence and life of other tonges are ours already, must now traffike for the dregges, to the end they may be said to have done somewhat.

Languages as all other mortall things have their infancy, and age; their waxe and wane; the states where they are used are the Loadstars;

Ad cuius numen, motumque moveris.

At whose motion or command

They climbe, decline, or make a stand.

With their prosperity and adversity they for the most part rise, and fall, which the best of Languages can largely testify, who had they not even miraculously by providence, beene hitherto conserved in books, had long since perished, & beene buried in the dust of oblivion; they being now as strange to their owne birth places, as to us. Our Language hath long beene in the ascendent together with our monarchy, & at last by excellent artists is even brought to the height, which already our over-diligent and intruding spirits, with their botching seeke to bring to the wane.

God grant it prognosticate no greater ruine, it is an evill symptomme of further detriment.

Notwithstanding I hope it is no inevitable destiny, but that our *Language* & *Empire*, shall yet enjoy a far long noon, & not so soon post towards the west, let these busie creatures be checked and restrained from such presuming liberties, and no doubt but it will be a sovereign antidote, to maintaine the splendor of the *English* Language in the Meridian of purity a long time, which these active persons staine and obscure.

How ridiculous if well considered is the merchandise they seeke to seeke to sell for currant.

Let me afford you a few examples, and I am deceived if they will not move both your anger, and laughter, read and censure. *Adpugno*,
Algale, *Adspiciare*, *dasse*, *desult*, *depx*, *Brockity*, *Bulbicare*, *extorgne*

*torque, thriolate, Caprion, Contrast, Calidate, Fraxate, Freytes,
Imporse, Internabe, incase, Gingreat, Glabrotall, Halitate, Liguri-
tion, Lurcast, Kemand, Mephistic, Mirminodized, Obslature, Or-
hation, Nixion, Nanstible, Plumatrice, Prodigity, Puellation, Rap-
tion, Reref, Romatize, Sudato, Solofick, Sracobe, Subgrund, Tri-
diculate, Triffull, Wadshaw, Xanticall, Texasc, Vitulare, Vndosow,
Yambrash, Zoografe.*

A thousand other so unnaturall phrases, that they cause a loathing in a curios and judicious eye. These and such as these; that set up mints for such base coyn would I haue the *Arts* to persecute & not suffer them to mix their counterfeit stufce amongst our purer ingredients so to canonize them for currant. Our Language is copious enough already, we need traffick no more to enrich it; at least not so oft, for yet I will not deny, but some pearle or other may be left behinde uncheapened by our former factors, which is worth the buying, yet would I have it naturalized here with judgement, and authority.

Let us improve what graine we have already, and we shall finde it full as much as is needfull, or at least as much as our soyle is well able to beare. Let us not therefore with a base and busie avarice, abuse our Language with the dregges of others, being possessed with the perfections of them all already, for by enfranchising, refining, and implantring strange, old, and new words it is happily become even the prince of all the vulgar; from the dignity of which nothing hath so much detracted, as our owne vaine affecting, admiring and applauding forraigne tonges above measure: which makes strangers judge our owne contemptible. Our separation from the continent world doth make our Language insular, which is one cheife reason of its want of esteeme amongst forraigners, they scarce having use of it; few of them frequenting our climate, and we swarming into theirs. Though some of the wisest of them now acknowledge the worth of it, and with envy looke upon the perfection of our Language, as well as upon the excellency of our Country.

Though in this conclusion I here strike sayle, and vaile to the learned Languages, let that not detract from the worth of ours, which is parallel, if not Superior to the best remaining: it is as courageous as the Spanish, and courtilike as the French, as amorous as the Italian, and as fluent as any; wherefore thinke me not overweighed with affection, if I beleive the most renowned of other nations, to have laid the very Elixer of their tongues perfection in trust with our Island.

FINIS.